

*The*  
Melville Society  
N E W S L E T T E R

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Enclosed with our current issue is an announcement in which many of our members will be interested — the announcement of a newly organized Emerson Society. Patterned in some respects after the Thoreau Society and our own organization, the Emerson Society will serve scholars and others interested in the Concord School and in the Romantic Period of American literature generally. Active in the founding of this new group is Kenneth W. Cameron, one of our own members. To the Emerson Society a cordial welcome and our best wishes for long years of service to American literary scholarship.

### ANNUAL MEETING

President Harrison Hayford has announced that there will be a meeting of the Melville Society in connection with the annual convention of the Modern Language Association late in December. While the exact time of the meeting has not yet been determined, it will probably come on the day *before* or the day *after* Wednesday, December 28, when sessions of the American Literature Group are scheduled. The place of meeting is also indefinite for the moment. If exact information fails to reach you before you leave for the convention, inquire at the M. L. A. information desk in Chicago.

There will be both a business meeting and an academic meeting. At the latter William Braswell and R. H. Fogle will read papers on *Billy Budd*, and a third paper on the same subject probably will be scheduled. An opportunity for informal conversation and good fellowship will be provided.

Any member who desires to present any matter for consideration of those attending the meeting should send advance information to Harrison Hayford, Department of English, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

### MELVILLE BIBLIOGRAPHY

A selective, check-list bibliography of Melville is being prepared by Harrison Hayford and Gordon Roper. The Northwestern University Press will publish the volume next year.

Meanwhile, discussion has been going on for a number of years about the

possibility of a formal, definitive bibliography to be sponsored by the Society and prepared by an official committee. An excellent university press is believed willing to undertake the publication of such a bibliography. When the Hayford-Roper volume appears, however, will the longer bibliography still be needed? When this question was considered recently by members of our executive committee, full information on the Hayford-Roper bibliography had not yet become available. The consensus at that time was in favor of establishing immediately a Bibliography Committee to proceed with plans for a definitive edition to be followed by annual supplements.

About 15 years ago (if the writer's memory serves) a Melville bibliography was begun by Robert Forsythe and John H. Birss. After Forsythe's death Birss continued work on the project, but the manuscript was never completed. A committee of the Society in 1952 issued a very useful Bibliography for 1951, which was to have been followed by additional yearly lists. Members of this committee were Stuart C. Sherman (chairman), John H. Birss, and Gordon Roper. It has been felt that this committee, possibly with the addition of the secretary to handle business matters for it, might well continue to function for the purpose of producing a detailed and complete Melville bibliography to be published under the sponsorship of the Society.

What is the next step? Unfortunately, attempts to secure some commitment from Birss as to his possible participation in the project or information as to any plans he may have in connection with his original project have proved unsuccessful. Since he was first in the field, some attention should be given to his desires and plans. Assuming that he would be willing to work with a committee of the Society, is the definitive bibliography actually needed, in view of the fact that a check-list bibliography is to be available soon? The question might perhaps be discussed in some detail at the annual meeting. In the meantime, any member who has ideas to express on the subject is invited to communicate with the secretary or with members of the executive committee.



## GIL WILSON'S TOUR

The executive committee has agreed to allow use of the Society's name as a sponsor of the tour which Gil Wilson will make this winter and spring to exhibit his illustrations of *Moby-Dick* and publicize the forthcoming motion picture based on Melville's plot. The Society will assume no obligation of any kind in relation to the tour. Wilson expects to speak at many schools and colleges in all parts of the United States and to use colored slides with his talk. He has generously suggested the possibility of selling, auctioning, or raffling the original copies of his illustrations as a fund-raising device for the Society's treasury. Expenses of his tour will be paid, of course, by John Huston, producer of the motion picture.

## NOTES

An abridged version of *Moby-Dick* appears in the first volume issued by the Classics Appreciation Society, which offers a home study course in the Greatest Books. Other works condensed in the volume are Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Homer's *Odyssey*, and Rousseau's *The Social Contract*.

The New York University Press has announced as in preparation *Herman Melville's Whaling Years*, by Wilson Heflin.

On May 14 Harrison Hayford, our president, was elected president of the American Studies Association of Wisconsin and Northern Illinois.

References to Melville's Tahitian adventures and verification of his accuracy in describing the idols and altars in the Typee valley, as well as two magnificent photographs of Polynesian scenery, are contained (under the title "Romance Rediscovered," pp. 20-21) in Stanley Rayfield, ed., *How Life Gets the Story* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1955). \$5.00.

For many years the standard price for a used set of the Constable edition of Melville's works (12 vols.) was \$125.00. Recently Bernard Quaritch in London has offered a set in fine condition for only \$56.00. For some of us this may mark a very encouraging trend.

The forthcoming two-penny postage stamp of New Zealand will depict a typical whaling scene of the South Seas. The stamp will commemorate the hunting of the sperm whale in New Zealand waters one hundred years ago.

Kyusaku Hori, president of the Nickatsu Motion Picture Company of Japan, is reported to be planning a "whale farm" where a variety of whales can be kept for scientific study and as a tourist attraction.

A complete list of items in the Melville Room at the Berkshire Athenaeum has been prepared and will be distributed later to all members, courtesy of the Athenaeum and Harrison Hayford.

Two dissertations having to do with Melville (one on *Billy Budd* and the other on *Clarel*) are nearing completion at Northwestern University.

According to a late report, work on the Melville letters by William Gilman and Merrell Davis has been completed, and the manuscript is now being typed.

Harrison Hayford's work on the *Melville Handbook* has been delayed by the desire to include all important recent materials. He welcomes offprints of articles published by any of our members. Hayford is also completing his *Melville's Prisoners and Other Images*.

Harcourt Brace will publish a book by Perry Miller on *The Wars of the Literati*, which discusses the New York literary cliques (including the Duyckinck circle) of the forties.

Merton Sealts has a supply of *Melville's Reading* and the supplement which members may purchase for \$1.50 per set, postpaid. The supplement alone is 25 cents. Write to him at Lawrence College, Appleton, Wisconsin.

Published September 23: Edward H. Rosenberry, *Melville and the Comic Spirit* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955). \$4.00.

Published March 19: Harry H. Clark and others, *The Development of American Literary Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955). \$4.00.

THE *Melville Society* NEWSLETTER  
IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
Melville Society, a group of literary scholars and others interested  
in the life and works of Herman Melville. The Society seeks to  
facilitate the exchange of information among its members, to  
stimulate the study of Melville's life and works, and to encourage  
literary, historical, and bibliographical research. Membership is  
two dollars per year and includes all services of the Society. Asso-  
ciate membership (non-voting) is one dollar per year and includes  
all issues of the Newsletter. Address Tyrus Hillway, secretary, at  
Colorado State College, Greeley, Colorado.